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lent auxiliaries, in the shape of a drunken father, an intriguing mother, an old grandmother, dumb with palsy, who is made to speak by the electrical cure (in this Madame Figuiet makes use of her husband's science), a grisette sister, with her roistering lover, an old maid duenna, who also falls in love with the hero of the story, and a Savoyard servant, who loves one of the heroines.

Not merely in the fine delineation of the characters, but in the descriptions of local scenery and customs in Languedoc, this story is very charming. We have a graphic picture of the Carnival, the scenes of Easter week, a fancy ball, the street promenades, and the interior life, with costumes and style very carefully noted. The most original scene, perhaps, is that of the *chasse aux macreuses*, — wild-duck hunting by torchlight on the lakes, differing widely from any form of sport which we have seen elsewhere described. Then we have the game of *mail*, played with great hammers and wooden balls. Flowers are described by Madame Figuiet with a minuteness which shows the botanist not less than the artist. Altogether this French story is one that can be commended as fit for any circle, and good alike in its style, its sentiment, and its final impression.

8. — *Lettres d'un Bon Jeune Homme à sa Cousine Madeleine. Recueilles et mises en Ordre.* Par EDMOND ABOUT. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères. 1861. 12mo. pp. 397.

AN author may presume too far upon his popularity; and this is what M. About has done in his latest volume. He has proved that it is possible for the author of a dozen brilliant books to be absolutely dull. The sketches in this volume are fragmentary, disconnected, often without point and even without wit. They seem to be gathered from the loose articles which have been thrown off from time to time in the magazines and newspapers. The title, foolishly fantastic, has no significance at the head of a volume which is mainly concerned with political satire and discussion, with topics in which neither the "Good Young Man" nor his "Cousin Madeleine" would be likely to take any special interest. Some of the political speculations are sensible enough; but in the main they are excessively careless, thin, and worthless. M. About is not the person to offer any valuable views on the "Imperial Democracy," the "Liberty of the Press," "Parliamentary Régime," or "Municipal Liberties"; nor can his saucy and dashing style save his lucubrations on these themes from becoming tiresome.

The volume is not all dull, however; and if it had come from a

writer less noted, might even, in its earlier chapters, surprise by its piquancy. There are bright things enough said to make the fortune of any ordinarily heavy writer. The sketch of Baden-Baden, which opens the series, is very racy; and throughout the book there are scattered pleasant epigrammatic sayings. "La plus riche de toutes les libertés, c'est la liberté de s'enrichir," is worth keeping for a proverb. What the popular newspaper says will apply to some American journals of like kind, — "Je ne suis pas un journal de principes, car mes principes ont changé plus d'une fois; je suis un journal de famille, et je me glorifie d'être toujours resté fidèle à mes affections." "I have the same religion as the rest of you," says the Legitimist to his Catholic friends, "since *je crois sans examiner et sans pratiquer*." *Apropos* of M. Veuillot, he makes an ingenious pun, — "Car il est plus facile de ruiner un éditeur que de ruiner un argument, et la réplique la plus *saisissante* sera toujours une *saisié*." "If bishops," he says, "have ceased to give to the children of kings lessons of *politique*, the time will come when kings will give bishops lessons of *politesse*." Hits like these redeem the book from absolute dulness; but as a whole, it is the least interesting of all the volumes which bear M. About's name, and shows decidedly a loss of power.

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9. — 1. *The Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII. to the Death of George II.* By HENRY HALLAM, LL. D., F. R. A. S., Foreign Associate of the Institute of France. Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee, & Co. 1861. 3 vols. Small 8vo.
 2. *The Constitutional History of England since the Accession of George III.* 1760–1860. By THOMAS ERSKINE MAY, C. B. Vol. I. London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts. 1861. 8vo. pp. xvi. and 512.

WE have had occasion so recently to speak at some length of Mr. Hallam's general characteristics as an historian, and of the special merits of his "Constitutional History of England," that any further remarks on that great work would be superfluous, and it is now necessary only to note the publication of a new edition of it almost simultaneously with the appearance of the first volume of Mr. May's History, which is designed as a continuation of Mr. Hallam's labors.

The task which Mr. May has assumed is by no means an easy one. He has to follow a writer whose candor and impartiality are universally recognized, and cannot be too highly praised; his narrative traverses a period during which party prejudice and passion burned with even